companies drilled 27 exploratory wells on various prospects identified based on the surveys conducted by them.

Exploration of New Sources for Oil Export

713. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a contingent plan to tap the new sources of gas and oil export in the international market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the said plan contains any provision for augmenting the domestic production in this sector; and

(d) if , so the details thereof and if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Several steps have been taken to increase oil and gas production in the country and tap oil reserves abroad, which include the following:

(i) to improve the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,000 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields.

(ii) to increase exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Under the first and second rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 47 blocks. Offer of 27 exploration blocks under NELP-III was also announced in March 2002 and a total of 45 bids for 23 Blocks has been received by the bid closing date i.e. 28.8.2002.

(iii) to explore kin new areas, especially in deep water and difficult frontier areas, as also explore in the deeper layers of the producing fields.

(iv) to develop faster the newly Discovered fields and to step up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas.

(v) to acquire acreage abroad, ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the wholly owned subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has acquired participating interests in the overseas E&P projects in Vietnam, Myamnar & Iraq. In 2001, OVL optioned 20% stake in Sakhalin-I project of Russia with and estimated investment of about US$1.74 billion (Rs. 8,500 crore, approximately).

Assessment of Gas in Tripura

714. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States which are rich in petroleum and natural gas;

(b) the quantity of gas assessed by ONGC in Tripura;

(c) the projects in which the huge amount of gas in Tripura will be utilised; and

(d) whether there is any forecasting about the presence of oil in Tripura?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) As per current assessment, States and Union Terrirtories considered prospective from hydrocarban point of view are; Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttranchal, West Bengal and Pondicherry.

(b) As on 1.4.2002, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has established 27,981 Billion Cubic metre (BCM) of ultimate gas reserves in the State of Tripura.

(c) M/s North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) and M/s Oswal Chemical & Fertilizer, (OCFL) are two major prospective users for the proposed power plant and the fertilizer plant, respectively, to be set up in Tripura.